

Message Text

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14-12

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 HEW-02

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SCA-01 USIA-06 EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7980

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FOL MSG FM SURABAYA BEING REPEATED TO YOU

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E.O. 11652/ N/A

TAGS: EPAP, ECON, PINS, ID

SUBJ: NATURAL DISASTERS: EAST JAVA HIT BY FLOODS AND PESTS

1. SUMMARY. EAST JAVA HAS SUFFERED TWO NATURAL DISASTERS DURING THE 1974-75 RAINY SEASON WHICH MAY HAVE AN EFFECT ON FOOD PRODUCTION IN THE PROVINCE. COMBINED WITH THE WORST FLOODS IN SIX YEARS, THE WERENG PEST HAS CAUSED DAMAGE TO THE RICE CROP IN BANYUWANGI, ONE OF EAST JAVA'S MAJOR RICE PRODUCING AREAS. OPINIONS ARE MIXED ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE DISASTERS ON FOOD PRODUCTION, BUT ONE RELIABLE ESTIMATE PUTS THE RICE PRODUCTION SHORTFALL AT ABOUT 35 PERCENT. EAST JAVA GOVERNOR NOER IS CONFIDENT THAT THE PROBLEMS CAN BE OVERCOME, BUT THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF RURAL INCIDENTS IN THE LOW-RICE PERIOD LATER THIS YEAR.

2. OVER THE RAINY SEASON JUST ENDING, EAST JAVA HAS SUFFERED THE WORST FLOODS SINCE 1969. TOTAL DAMAGE IS ESTIMATED AT RP. 4.5 BILLION WITH DAMAGE TO ROADS, DIKES, BRIDGES, AND FISH PONDS APPROXIMATELY RP. 1.8 BILLION.

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45,000 HECTARES OF LAND HAVE BEEN INUNDATED AND ABOUT

370,000 PERSONS DIRECTLY AFFECTED. THE FLOODS HAVE
CREATED INSTANT UNEMPLOYMENT FOR MORE THAN 165,000 PERSONS.

3. THE AREAS MOST SEVERELY AFFECTED ARE THE KABUPATEN
ALONG THE LOWER COURSES OF THE SOLO AND BRANTAS RIVERS.
THIS INCLUDES PONOROGO, KEDIRI, JOMBANG, MADIUN, NGANJUK,
BOJONEGORO, TUBAN, LAMONGNJU AND GRESIK KABUPATEN.

4. AT THE SAME TIME, THE WERENG BEETLE HAS DESTROYED
APPROXIMATELY 20,000 HECTARES OF RICE FIELDS IN BANYUWANGI
KABUPATEN. BECAUSE OF A SHORTAGE OF INSECTICIDE AND
INITIAL RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF LOCAL OFFICIALS TO
ADMIT THERE WAS A PROBLEM, THE INFESTATION WAS NOT CHECKED
UNTIL RECENTLY. FARMERS HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED TO PRODUCE
SECOND CROPS, LIKE CORN, SOY BEANS, AND PEANUTS, BUT ON
A VISIT TO THE AFFECTED AREA LAST WEEK A CONSULATE OFFICER
SAW FEW SIGNS OF SECOND CROP PLANTING. INSTEAD, THE AREA
LOOKS LIKE A VAST WASTELAND WHICH IS QUICKLY BEING ENGULFED
IN GRASS.

5. THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF EAST JAVA'S DOLOG (DEPOT LOGISTIK-
REGIONAL LOGISTICS OFFICE) TOLD US LAST WEEK THAT THE EAST
JAVA DOLOG HAS BEEN ORDERED BY BULOG TO REDUCE ITS RICE
COLLECTION TARGET BY 35 PERCENT, THE SAME REDUCTION AS THAT
ANTICIPATED IN TOTAL OUTPUT. DOLOG WILL ONLY BUY 265,000
TONS OF GABAH, UNHULLED RICE, IN EAST JAVA THIS YEAR.

6. SUFFERING AND CONCERNED EFFORTS TO MITIGATE IT HAS LED
IN SOME AREAS TO VENALITY AMONG LOCAL OFFICIALS. A RELIABLE
SOURCE HAS TOLD US THAT IN THE AREA OF WERENG INFESTATION,
THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT HAS PROVIDED PORTABLE SPRAYERS
AND PESTICIDES FOR USE BY FARMERS FREE OF CHARGE. THE
SOURCE SAID THAT A NUMBER OF VILLAGE CHIEFS WERE CHARGING
FARMERS RP. 1,000 FOR ONE-HALF DAY'S USE OF THE SPRAYER AND
INSECTICIDE.

7. GOVERNOR NOER TOLD ME ON APRIL 29 THAT THE FLOODING SITUATION
IS UNDER CONTROL AND THAT ONLY 2.5 PERCENT OF THE PROVINCE'S
RICE PRODUCING LANDS HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY THE FLOODS. HE
CLAIMED THE WERENG BEETLES ARE UNDER CONTROL. "I AM ALWAYS
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OPTIMISTIC", HE SAID. HOWEVER, ONE OF HIS ASSISTANTS ASKED
WHETHER USG WOULD BE MAKING DONATION FOR FLOOD RELIEF.

8. OTHER CONSULATES SUCH AS THE JAPANESE AND SOVIETS HAVE
TAKEN UP COLLECTIONS FOR THE FLOOD VICTIMS AMONG THEIR STAFFS.
IF THE EMBASSY HAS NO OBJECTION, WE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A
VOLUNTARY COLLECTION WITHIN THE OFFICIAL AMERICAN COMMUNITY,
INCLUDING THE CONSULATE, USDLG, AND USIS.

9. THE REAL IMPACT OF THE FLOODS AND WERENG MAY NOT BE COMPLETELY APPARENT UNTIL THE PACEKLIK OR SEASON BETWEEN THE RICE HARVESTS THIS FALL. THAT IS TRADIONALLY A TIME OF RICE SHORTAGES, AND THE PROVINCE'S REDUCED RICE PRODUCTION WILL EXACERBATE THE PROBLEM. THE COMBINED DISASTERS AND ECONOMIC DISLOCATIONS COULD LEAD TO LOCALIZED INCIDENTS AND PERHAPS DISILLUSIONMENT WITH CONTINUING EFFORTS TO MODERNIZE RICE PRODUCTION IN EAST JAVA.
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